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Water Plan Update 2013 Volume One comments

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Comments on Volume One of the California Water Plan Update 2013 by Council Member Fred Strong, City of El Paso de Robles, CA

While I am very pleased with the bulk of work, and presentation, regarding analysis of the current water situation and challenges, I find one area of necessary action totally lacking despite the acknowledgement that it is an immediate need.

Chapter 1 relates early on (page 4) that we need "future investments" (line 9) and to "create more stable and disciplined/strategic investment in innovation and infrastructure" (page 5, lines 13-14). The level of need is emphasized in line 17: "In California, nearly \$600 billion in assets and more than 7 million people are at risk of flooding."

You note (page 6, lines 1-4) that "intensive collaboration" is necessary and "... can be used for aligning funding and finance planning across more than 2,300 local, State and federal government agencies...".
On page 7 you list "Finance planning framework" as the first of the "New and expanded topics".

Chapter 2's title is: "Imperative to Invest in Innovation and Infrastructure" and stresses the "urgency" for continued investment to, "help avert several foreseeable societal catastrophes, such as loss of life and property from floods, unreliable water supplies, and adverse impacts of droughts; depletion of groundwater basins; irreversible land subsidence; and declining ecosystems."

On page 1 your second section title is, "A Critical Time to Invest" you begin to deal with a litany of risks such as, "Greater Drought Impacts", "Increasing Flood Risk," "Depleting Groundwater Basins," "Aging Infrastructure", etc. (pages 2-6). On pages 7 and 8 you deal with "Fundamental Lessons," among which is "State Government has a lead role in coordinating the water management activities of federal, tribal, regional, and local governments and agencies and developing stable strategies for financing water management actions." (page 8). You stress funding continually through this chapter and note that we require "... up to \$500 billion of future investment over the next few decades..." and also note, however, "... that debt is at near-record levels, existing bond funds will be fully allocated by 2017, willingness of the public to pay for government activities is waning."

I could go on and on with further examples and repetitions, with detail, of the need, cost and benefits stated in Chapter 3, pages 8, 20,21,22, etc.

Chapters 4 through 6, deal with rights, planning responsibilities, efforts, variables, uncertainties and informed decision making.

Chapter 7 is where all of the previous effort drops into a sink hole. From page 2's section "Limitations of the Update 2013 Framework" and through the chapter the impression created is that any attempt to identify, or suggest, funding for the need identified will be kicked down the road to "California Water Plan Update 2018".

After identifying (page 3), "...California will need \$44.5 billion to fix aging drinking water systems over the next two decades..." and following with an estimated need of an additional \$18.6 billion per year for specific areas you note that, "... local agencies are responsible for the majority of the total expenditures." (page 9)

Yet, on page 14, you state that the dollar need over the next 10 years is actually \$200 billion of which \$50 billion are already in the planning stages and "Local entities will pay the majority of these costs."

The figures given concerning the state of our "...807 high hazard dams..." is extremely concerning, especially when no specifics are given as to which dams are in the greatest immediate need.

This plan **must** call for immediate steps to develop an on-going financial plan from secure and continuing source(s) of money. At least a suggestion for continuing workshops, dedicated personnel, a legislative select committee or some other innovation should be included in this plan.

If the current available money will be totally depleted by 2018 we cannot wait until that time to begin a 10 to 15 year